

FACULTY OF MUSIC UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
CHORAL MUSIC ON CAMPUS

Concert Choir

A SAINT CECILIA DAY TRIBUTE
TO BENJAMIN BRITTEN
(1913 - 1976)

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Doreen Rao, conductor

Wednesday, November 22, 1989

Knox College Chapel

8:00 pm

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PROGRAM

Fanfare for St. Edmundsbury (1959)

Benjamin Britten
(1913 - 1976)

Lay a Garland (1837)

R.L. de Pearsall
(1795 - 1856)

Lay a garland on her hearse
Of dismal yew;
Maidens willow branches wear;
Say she died true,
Her love was false, but she was firm.
Upon her body lie lightly, thou gentle earth.

Ode for St. Cecilia's Day (1692)

Henry Purcell
(1659 - 1695)

Chorus

Hail! bright Cecilia, hail to thee!
Great Patroness of us and Harmony.
Who whilst among the choir above,
Thou dost thy former skill improve.

Quartet

With rapture of delight dost see
Thy fav'rite Art make up of part
Of infinite Felicity.

Chorus

Hail! bright Cecilia, hail to thee!
Great Patroness of us and Harmony.

A.M.D.G. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam* (1939) -- Canadian premiere

Benjamin Britten

ROSA MYSTICA

The rose in a mystery -- where is it found?
Is it anything true? Does it grow upon the ground?
It was made of earth's mould, but it went from men's eyes
And its place is a secret and shut in the skies.

In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
Find me a place by thee, mother of mine.

But where was it formerly? which is the spot
That was blest in it once, though now it is not? --
It is Galilee's growth: it grew at God's will
And broke into bloom upon Nazareth hill.

In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
I shall look on thy loveliness, mother of mind.

Tell me the name now, tell me its name.
The heart guesses easily: is it the same? --
Mary the Virgin, well the heart knows,
She is the mystery, she is that rose.

In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
I shall come home to thee, mother of mine.

Is Mary the rose then? Mary the tree?
But the blossom, the blossom there, who can it be? --
Who can her rose be? It could be but one:
Christ Jesus our Lord, her God and her son.

In the gardens of God, in the daylight divine
Shew me thy son, mother, mother of mine.

Does it smell sweet too in that holy place? --
Sweet unto God, and the sweetness is grace:
O breath of it bathes great heaven above
In grace that is charity, grace that is love.

To thy breast, to thy rest, to thy glory divine
Draw me by charity, mother of mine.

(Verses 3, 6 and 7 are omitted from Britten's setting)

Prayer I

Oratio Patyris Condren:
O Jesu vivens in Maria

Jesu that dost in Mary dwell,
Be in thy servants' hearts as well,
In the spirit of thy holiness,
In the fullness of thy force and stress,
In the very ways that thy life goes
And virtues that thy pattern shows,

In the sharing of thy mysteries;
And every power in us that is
Against thy power put under feet
In the Holy Ghost the Paraclete
To the glory of the Father, Amen.

* * * INTERMISSION * * *

Hymn to St. Cecilia (1942)

Benjamin Britten

I.
In a garden shady this holy lady
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,
Like a black swan as death came on
Poured forth her song in perfect calm:
And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,
And notes tremendous from her great engine
Thundered out on the Roman air.

Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,
Moved to delight by the melody,
White as an orchid she rode quite naked
In an oyster shell on top of the sea;
At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing
Came out of their trance into time again,
And around the wicked in Hell's abysses
The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

II.

I cannot grow;
I have no shadow
To run away from,

I only play.

I cannot err;
There is no creature
Whom I belong to,
Whom I could wrong.

I am defeat
When it knows it
Can now do nothing
By suffering.

All you lived through,
Dancing because you
No longer need it
For any deed.

I shall never be
Different. Love me.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

III.

O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all
The gaucheness of her adolescent state,
Where Hope within the altogether strange
From every outworn image is released,
And Dread born whole and normal like a beast
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.

O dear white children casual as birds,
Playing among the ruined languages,
So small beside their large confusing words,
So gay against the greater silences
Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,
Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,

O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,
Lost innocence who wished your lover dead,
Weep for the lives your wishes never led.

O cry created as the bow of sin
Is drawn across our trembling violin.

O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.

O law drummed out by hearts against the still
Long winter of our intellectual will.

That what has been may never be again.

O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath
Of convalescents on the shores of death.

O bless the freedom that you never chose.

O trumpets that unguarded children blow
About the fortress of their inner foe.

O wear your tribulation like a rose.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

-- W.H. Auden

The World is Charged with the Grandeur of God

Arthur Bliss
(1891 - 1975)

1.
The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reckon his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell; the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs --
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

2.

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.

3.

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there!
Down in dim woods the diamond delves! the elves'-eyes!
The grey lawns cold where gold, where quickgold lies!
Wind-beat whitebeam! airy abeles set on a flare!
Flake-doves sent floating forth at a farmyard scare! --
Ah well! it is all a purchase, all is a prize.

But then! bid then! -- What? -- Prayer, patience, alms, vows.
Look, look: a May-mess, like on orchard boughs!
Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows!
These are indeed the barn; withindoors house
The shocks. This piece-bright paling shuts the spouse
Christ home, Christ and his mother and all his hallows.

(Look!)

From *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*
published by Oxford University Press

Spirituals from *A Child of Our Time*

Deep River
Steal Away
Nobody knows

Michael Tippett
(b. 1905)

James Pinhorn, conductor;
Lisa Lindo, soprano; Nancy Young, soprano;
Lori Klassen, mezzo soprano; John McGillis, tenor;
Greg Carpenter, tenor; Richard Theiss, bass

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PROGRAM NOTES

This evening's concert celebrates the art of English choral music, from the first of three Odes for St. Cecilia's Day by Henry Purcell, to the Canadian premiere performance of Benjamin Britten's newly-published work *A.M.D.G.* (*Ad majorem Dei gloriam* "to the greater glory of God"). Including the madrigal masterpieces of Robert Lucas de Pearsall and the Arthur Bliss cantata for chorus, flutes and brass, the world of English choral music represents a wide spectrum of poetic and musical thought.

R.L. de Pearsall's eight-voice madrigal was written in the later part of his career. de Pearsall developed an intimate acquaintance with the music of the English madrigal school. From around 1837, he wrote in the English madrigal style for the rest of his life. One of sixty published madrigals, *Lay a Garland* is considered a masterpiece in the madrigal form. It is highly imaginative and bears a beautiful vocal sonority.

In Purcell's time it was the fashion to produce odes set to elaborate music whenever a festival was to be celebrated. The "in praise of music" theme, used for the festivals of St. Cecilia, generated large numbers of compositions and concerts in Purcell's time. His 1692 *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* shows Purcell's power to express excited emotion associated with these special occasions. The declamatory nature in the chorus *Hail! bright Cecilia* perfectly illustrates the ode style of singing.

The Canadian premiere performance of Britten's *A.M.D.G.* (*Ad majorem Dei gloriam* "To the greater glory of God") is sung by the University of Toronto Concert Choir tonight in memory of the great nineteenth century poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844 - 1889). Hopkins died one hundred years ago, never having seen his verse in print. In this poetry set by Britten (and later this evening by Arthur Bliss), Hopkins reveals the dynamism of nature, the

hurting and buffeting of things, that reveals "the power and the glory" -- a form of religious realism and musical majesty.

The formal beauty and innate musicality of Hopkins' poetry creates a great challenge for composers interested in developing these texts chorally. Hopkins' texts utilize the full resources of the English language. The poems suggest their own "life of sound", created by explosive rhythms and sensuous colours. The rhythm and colour of Hopkins' verse gives our ears a quasi-musical effect -- the verse "sounds" complete without actual music. Any attempt to set Hopkins' texts cannot fall below the high standards of integrity which Hopkins, unmistakably, has established in verse.

The composition of *A.M.D.G.* was one of Britten's first projects in the United States. He finished the sketches of all seven settings in the summer of 1939. The unaccompanied work was intended for Peter Pears and his group of "Round Table Singers" to perform in London in November of that year. But the outbreak of war prevented Pears' return. In correspondence, Pears recalled singing through these pieces with solo singers on each part in the early fall of 1939, but it is not clear that the settings were ever performed publicly before 1984, when the BBC Northern Singers sang "*Prayer I*" and "*Rosa Mystica*" at the Aldeburgh Festival.

The manuscript composition sketch is in the Britten-Pears Library, Aldeburgh. There are also copies of these two songs made by Peter Pears, who often acted as Britten's copyist. The fair copy, like the sketch, is crossed through. It is not clear why Britten abandoned the work. One could speculate that it has something to do with the great technical difficulties that the songs pose. The work for unaccompanied choir was published by Faber Music in 1989.

The Concert Choir has thoroughly enjoyed the study of these songs. While the technical demands have been great, we have found that Hopkins and Britten share the qualities to which all musicians aspire: high standards of integrity, concentration and musicality.

-- D.R.

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In little more than a decade, **DOREEN RAO** has established herself as a master teacher, clinician, and conductor, well-known not only throughout the United States and Canada, but also internationally. She made her conducting debut at London's Royal Festival Hall in 1980 and her New York conducting debut with the American Symphony Orchestra in 1985. She is acclaimed for her work as music director of the Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus in Illinois. As assistant conductor of the Chicago Symphony Chorus under Margaret Hillis and Sir George Solti, she helped prepare recorded performances which won four Grammy Awards and a Grand Prix du Disque. She has worked with the Grant Park (Chicago) Symphony, the Chicago Civic Orchestra, the Evanston (Illinois) Symphony, and the

Oregon Bach Festival, and has prepared choral works for Claudio Abbado, Edo de Waart, Istvan Kertez, Jorge Mester, and Helmuth Rilling, among others.

Her extensive work with university and community groups is equally acclaimed. She has conducted numbers of all-state choruses and served as guest conductor and clinician at major conferences, including those of the American Choral Directors Association and the Kodaly Educators.

Appointed assistant professor at the University of Toronto in 1988, Doreen Rao continues to maintain her guest conducting and lecture appearances. She will direct the special two-day workshop, *The Art of Contemporary Choral Music*, in January, 1990 with John Poole, conductor of the BBC Singers; John Poole will be in residence at the Faculty of Music as the 1990 Smith Visitor in Music.

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Sopranos

Maria Antonakos
Sandra Churchill
Shira Gilbert
Barbara Hannigan*
Adele Kozak
Lisa Lindo
Jennifer Maines
Trish O'Callaghan
Katerina Papadolias
Susan Shantora+
Christin Shave
Larissa Szepetyk
Noa Tombalakian
Paula Lynn Walker
Nancy Young

Altos

Vanessa Grant*/
Kimberley Hanley
Diana Kim
Lori Klassen+/
Serene Liang
Liann Middlehurst
Christine Slevan+
Linda Traversy
Dianne Wells
Patti Vipond
Alexa Wing

Tenors

Greg Carpenter+/
Mark Huang
Mark McCallen
John McGillis
Ian Riddell*
Gordon Stewart

Basses

Albert Fung
Steve Gokool
Dean Jobin-Bevans▲
James McGowan
Brett Polegato*/
Marcos Pujol
Tim Spence
Richard Theiss+
Sheldon Wong

Carol Issacs, Accompanist

+ Soloists in Purcell *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*

* Soloists in Britten *Hymn to St. Cecilia*

+ Section leader

▲ Manager

 President

Instrumental Ensemble

Violin

Krista Buckland

Flutes

Jeannette Hirasawa
Martina Kurth

Trumpets

James Duncan
Scott Harrison
Paul Kemerer
Ira Zingraff

Trombones

Emily Harris
Ross Harwell
Dean Pattison
Don Rayment

Organ

Lydia Adams

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UPCOMING EVENTS--
CHORAL MUSIC ON CAMPUS CONTINUES

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1989

The University Women's Chorus, conducted by Ann Cooper Gay,
performs Paul Sconka's *Concierto de Navidad* and *Salvator Mundi* by William Mathias,
followed by a performance of Benjamin Britten's *St. Nicolas* with
the University Symphony Chorus and Orchestra,
the Claude Watson School for the Arts Children's Choir,
and tenor soloist Glyn Evans, conducted by Doreen Rao.

MACMILLAN THEATRE
EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING
80 QUEEN'S PARK CRESCENT
GENERAL ADMISSION \$4

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1989

Welcome, Yule!....ANN COOPER GAY conducts the
UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CHORUS.
This program includes Michael Haydn's *Magnificat*,
Paul Csonka's *Concierto de Navidad*,
Gabriel Fauré's *Ave Maria, Op. 93*,
and *Salvator Mundi* by William Mathias.

WALTER HALL
EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING
80 QUEEN'S PARK CRESCENT
GENERAL ADMISSION \$4

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